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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a tumultuous stage in human development. As teenagers enter high school, they face the emotional changes that come with the challenges and pressures of approaching adulthood. This paper presents an overview of comprehensive counseling programs that provide support for students entering high school. The paper opens with a review of adolescent development, discussing some of the research that has been carried out on self-esteem, independence, and peer relations. School programs which address developmental needs are also described, and it is suggested that counselors who work only with freshmen can help teens explore and develop their own self-awareness and self-acceptance. Likewise, student participation in small group counseling sessions that address problem-solving, decision-making, and gaining a sense of self-worth will lead to identifying personal goals. Programs, such as the Freshman Academy in Chicago, are working examples of such initiatives where freshmen are provided with a nurturing environment. It is recommended that such programs should include large group guidance sessions to share school policies and programs. It is also recommended that counselors should also provide small group and individual sessions to give students the opportunity to discuss their needs. (Contains 27 references.) (RJM)

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A Program of Counseling and Guidance to facilitate the transition from Middle School to High School

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Abstract

Adolescence is a tumultuous stage in human development. As teenagers enter high school they face the emotional changes that come with the challenges and pressures of approaching adulthood. It is also a time of physical change which happens over short period of time. Adolescents are often in conflict within themselves as they struggle with the desire for independence and the fear of future responsibility. Often they choose independence too rapidly and face involvement in sex, experimentation with alcohol and other drugs, violence and the deterioration of academic achievement.

The development of a comprehensive counseling program to provide support for adolescents entering high school is advised. Counselors who are assigned to work with only freshman students would provide the opportunity for teens to explore and develop their own self-awareness and self-acceptance. Student participation in small group counseling sessions to address problem-solving, decision-making and gaining a sense of self-worth will lead to identifying personal goals for their high school career.

Research

Adolescent development is a critical stage of life that includes several dramatic emotional, physical and social changes for children. Children reach a period of rapid growth in which their size and shape change significantly. They also approach sexual maturity. These changes in height, weight and overall body awareness cause adolescents to become sensitive of their new appearance. It also causes others to look at them differently and often expect more of them because of the maturing process. This is a time when family relations change drastically. Adolescents are seeking more independence and have less desire to be close to parents. They tend to have more conflicts with their parents than at any other time.

Although they are seeking independence, they are also seeking acceptance. Girls hope to be perceived as attractive and become concerned about their appearance and how people will respond to them (Schaffer, 1996). They also tend to be more concerned and troubled by their interpersonal relationships. Conversely, boys tend to have a more positive body image and tend to focus more on physical strength and ability, finance and vocational issues. They tend to show more reaction to challenging restrictions and attaining independence, rather than focusing on themselves. Although the role of females has undergone changes and the woman's movement has taken away many of the old stereotypes, females still tend to approach life from a more psychological and interpersonal point of view (Harper & Marshall, 1991). It is the writers experience that girls do tend to come to the counseling office with more personal problems and social

issues, but perhaps that is simply because they are more willing to converse about their problems than the boys are.

Piaget has defined the period of adolescence as the stage of formal-operational thinking. This stage is the beginning of planning a possible path for one's life, moving toward a stable identity and understanding other people's views and behaviors. At this stage a child should begin to have and use the tools to make decisions based on alternatives and consequences. Although these changes tend to lean toward independence and maturity, they are also the cause of challenging authority and rebellion against limitations. According to Piaget, adolescents can be so "centered" on themselves and their thinking that they actually appear more egocentric than they were during the grade school years (Schaffer, 1996).

According to Freud (Gilliland, James & Bowan, 1994), adolescence is the early stage of sexual pleasure but is the time when children experience conflicts learning how to control sexual feelings in an acceptable way. He believed the libido was involved in the formation of friendships and relationships as well as preparing for a career that would lead to satisfy the ultimate goal of human reproduction. Freud believed that this was the stage where people remained for the rest of their lives.

Erik Erikson's theory of development also consists of stages of needs and instincts but he placed less emphasis on the sexual aspect and focused more on the social influences. Erikson (Hansen, Rosenberg & Cramer, 1994) identified the area between childhood and adulthood as the stage of identity versus role confusion. He identified adolescence as the time when maturing children struggle with who they are and how they fit into their social world. He felt the reinforcement of peer social relationships was a key

factor to securing identity. Children in this age category not only begin to question who they are but who they will become. As teens enter high school a new dimension to learning becomes apparent. They are heading toward adulthood and a career. This may cause feelings of confusion and uncertainty in the adolescent.

Self-esteem can be defined as the way in which an individual evaluates himself or herself and is challenged during adolescence. The self-image and what others think is more important at this stage than at any other stage of life. (Harper & Marshall, 1991)

The developmental period of early adolescence is most notably the time of the onset of puberty, however the age of middle adolescence seems much more stressful. At this stage students are searching for personal recognition. They are struggling to be treated as adults but are not ready for the responsibilities associated with them. "...In middle adolescence, adjustment problems peak and...these are associated with the heightened struggle for independence and identity (Harper & Marshall, 1991).

Although peers are a valuable factor in establishing an adolescent's identity they may also be distractors and cause negative effects on academic achievement. Peer pressure may interfere with the desire for academic success because adolescents are seeking social acceptance that leads to popularity as a priority rather than focusing on academic goals which will impact on their future. Peer mentoring such as the Princeton Peer Leadership Program provides students with positive role-models whose goals are to engage freshman in the school, break down social and cultural barriers and help ninth grade students to accept and share their feelings (Fazio, 1995). Peer mentoring programs are often incorporated in the services provided by school counseling departments. Peer leaders are selected to provide support for students in the areas of academics, social

adjustment through orientation and emotional support as leaders of small groups (Mohai, 1991). The purpose of incorporating peer leadership into a counseling program for ninth graders would be to build a network of support for students that provides assistance through a "Helping Triad" of listening, feedback and decision-making (Turney, 1994).

There are many challenges in working with adolescents. They are part of a very complex system with includes many important people which impact on them. "The cooperation and trust of the... schools, teachers, parents and the often-contrary adolescents themselves" is a vital part of understanding how to address the needs of the adolescent (Cairns & Cairns, 1994). In the research conducted by Robert and Beverly Cairns, focused on adolescence, they identify several risks which become evident at this stage. "The risks of early school dropout, substance abuse, criminal offenses, psychiatric problems and teenage parenthood" are issues which surface during adolescence.

Studies in general point to concern over the increasing numbers of adolescents who experience some kind of crisis during this stage of development and are "at a high risk of being unprepared and unsuccessful in the modern social and economic world" (Cairns & Cairns, 1994).

Statistics published by the United States Department of Education in 1990 and 1991 support the premise that the adolescent population is at risk and in need of greater attention:

- Approximately 50% of children between the ages of 10 and 17 in the Unites States are at moderate to high risk category for failing at school, becoming delinquent or involved with the juvenile justice system, becoming involved in substance abuse or becoming an adolescent parent.

- Approximately 60% to 70% of all adolescents try alcohol and/or tobacco by age 15. At the age of 15, 20%to 25% are already identified as having problems involving substance use.
- In a survey and study conducted among a group of students ranging in age from grade 6 through grade 12, 48% of the surveyed students "placed high importance on self-serving, hedonistic values" and the majority reported that they have never spent time volunteering their time to help others.
- In the same survey as above, 47% of the adolescents reported that they were sexually active. They also reported that they did not use contraception regularly, thus supporting the rise in teenage pregnancy and parenthood.

These statistics support the proposals made by the New Jersey Counseling Initiative, Charting the 21st Century, which identifies risk as the fourth "R" in education. The report cites "divorce, poverty, racism, language barriers, homelessness and unemployment" as issues which have become the norm for many children. The Initiative also proposes the integration of primary prevention programs along with the academic basics to provide students with coping skills and strategies. The report also states that "the greatest threat facing our families and children are the problems associated with alcohol and drug abuse. This also correlates with data on the increased use of drugs and alcohol by adolescents.

A 1992 report by the Carnegie Corporation of New York published a number of recommendations for improving the performance of adolescents and promoting more healthy growth and development. Among the recommendations proposed were suggestions that extend into the community to provide support for adolescents. They

suggest tailoring programs that meet the needs and interests of the adolescent population and encourage organized social interactions that would lead adolescents away from negative influences. (Council on Adolescent Development, 1992)

The Lions-Quest Skills for Adolescence (1992) curriculum supports the need for a program in the schools which promotes a positive school climate and a base from which educators may intervene with adolescents. This program is designed to provide schools with tools to address the self-esteem of adolescents and provide an opportunity for students to participate and contribute in activities aimed at communication, problem-solving and social development. This program targets basic skills and behaviors that are needed as the student grows as an adolescent. The primary focus is on becoming responsible for one's own actions, mastering effective problem-solving strategies and making positive decisions, and identifying goals, developing a plan of action and following through with that plan. Another important part of this program is the involvement of parents and family members. The assignments and exercises are designed to encourage communication among students and their family.

School administrators also recognize the need for improved programs to address the increased numbers of students that are leaving school before completing the requirements of a diploma and those who stay but fall into the category of "at risk" and require intervention strategies. The Report of the Commission on the Restructuring of the American High School recommends that every school provide a program supporting Personal Adult Advocates for students to make education a more personal experience. (NASSP Practitioner, 1997). The advocacy program is designed to provide support at each grade level and identify activities specific for those grade levels. The role of the

counselor in this program is designed to be one of leadership. The Model Schools Project (NASSP Practitioner, 1997) identifies the counselor as head of the identified group and is responsible for communicating and interacting with the faculty advisors as both a group and as individuals.

The Teacher Advisor Program instituted by the Sarasota County School System in Florida provided a restructuring of the schools to allow for more time for counselors interface with teachers and assist them in developing supplemental materials that addresses the developmental and social issues of growing adolescents.(Myrick & Myrick,1990). Within this program a developmental guidance program should be implemented to address the areas of self-assessment, peer relationships, motivation, conflict resolution, decision-making and problem-solving and career development awareness (Ellis, 1990).

Programs like these all have one common thread that runs through them. They are designed out of a need for more personal attention by adolescents and the rise in critical issues which are impacting on the success of the students. The role of the counselor is particularly important because they have a deeper understanding of the needs of the students and are expected to have more refined interpersonal skills.

An important facet of the programs that are directed at reaching adolescents and addressing their needs is the involvement of parents. In each of the programs researched, parental input and communication is an important factor in the success of each program. The changes that the family system has undergone in terms of divorce, separation, remarriage and extended family involvement have impacted on the social, emotional and behavioral performance of many adolescents. Economic pressures have caused many

two-parent families to have both parents work either part-time or full-time. This results in less time for parents to communicate with their children and often provides much unsupervised time for the adolescent. This may result in the adolescent spending more time away from the home and forming friendships that the parents are unaware of. The need for socialization and acceptance is so great at this stage of life that adolescents often gravitate to groups that result in negative activity and influence. Parenting programs such as the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) assist parents in understanding their teenagers and provide and avenue for counselors to further interact with adolescents. This program provides trained educators with exercises and information to promote effective parenting skills and a mode of communication for the parents they interact with.

School counselors must be prepared to interact with students in a number of areas that affect their lives. They work with increasing numbers of students that come from single-parent and low income families. Many mothers who were traditionally at home are now forced to work. Family and parent problems often impact on the number of problems students demonstrate in the schools since often, children may become problematic in school as the result of a family crisis. When a problem persists within the school it is often related to the student's family or the extended social contacts. Working with families as part of the school counseling process affords the counselor the opportunity to identify the source of the behavior more effectively (Hunkle, 1992). Family intervention has become part of the school counseling services in order to address academic and behavioral problems (Paisley & Borders, 1995). It is also important to assist families in developing a plan that will facilitate the resolution of these problems.

Hinkle (1992) reports that the implementation of family counseling within the schools has been successful particularly over brief periods of time to address specific behaviors. Therefore counselors may need to apply family counseling techniques to supplement their roles as school counselors.

School districts are rapidly changing and seeing the rise in the numbers of minority and immigrant students. In addition, the changes in technology, increasing incidents of violence, rise in the numbers of teen pregnancies and substance abuse in the schools and communities are necessitating changes in the counseling services schools need to provide. In order to be effective, schools should provide an environment that engages students in the educational process. Students who feel a sense of belonging are more apt to be successful.

Why a High School Transition Program?

Adolescence has been identified as a time of growth and transition. Children are beginning to bridge the gap between youth and adulthood, coping with the physiological changes their bodies are going through and seeking new levels of socialization. At the time all of these factors are interacting, the adolescent also enters high school and this usually means change in the way school has been perceived up to this point.

The view of education in America today is changing from one which formerly promoted uniform instruction and behavior management for all students. It has become necessary to revise this thinking and create more complex structures to address the multitude of issues impacting on education. Schools now need to address a more diverse student body by providing appropriate staff, technological programs and innovative programs to improve student outcomes (Behar-Horenstein & Amatea, 1996).

One method of accomplishing dramatic change is through "systematic transformation" which refers to reforming the "cultural, structural, contextual, political and organizational patterns within schools (Behar-Horenstein & Amatea, 1996). Implementing this type of program means that school administrators must develop new knowledge and skills to bring about successful change by leading and encouraging staff to work together and be flexible in a previously structured environment.

The federal government's movement to increase educational standards also means that high schools need to raise academic achievement and prepare students for college and the work force. The National Center for Research in Vocational Education supports the belief that students need to have the skills to identify and solve problems,

work together effectively and be able to make sound decisions. This supports the need for change in the traditional educational philosophy of the past. These rapid changes in economy, labor and the evolution of the information age, coupled with the issues of personal identity, changing family systems and the impact of substance abuse, violence, teen pregnancy, rising drop-out rates and emotional problems support the need for a more intense counseling program for adolescents.

High school freshman come from an environment that for the most part has been nurturing and secure. They have had the support of teachers and administrators that interact closely with the student body. In many cases, when freshman enter high school they are part of a much larger population than they have known. Administrators, counselors, teachers and support personnel should be cognizant of this new and tentative experience and work together to provide support, assistance and a nurturing atmosphere for the new ninth grade students. It is helpful if the high school administrators communicate openly with the middle school administration and provide time for teachers at both levels to share their experiences and observations (Jett, 1994). Often teachers at each of these levels have little knowledge of how the others teach, plan or work with the students. Bringing the teachers into a working alliance will help to make the transition from one school to the other less traumatic because teachers will feel more comfortable and knowledgeable as they communicate with their students. Middle school teachers will have a working knowledge of what is done at the high school and can prepare their students for the upcoming year. They will be able to speak from experience rather than speculation, which can ease many of the anxieties eighth grade students may have. Counselors at the middle school should meet with the counselors at the high school and

work together to present course information to students and parents. They also can work with the emotional and social issues which are inherent to adolescents as they enter high school.

Programs such as the Freshman Academy, initiated in Chicago, are designed to address the transition into high school and provide a successful experience for students. The purpose of this program was to provide freshman students with a nurturing environment and explore how to improve the performance of the students. This program reports that statistics on freshman show consistently that they have the highest failure rate of all high school students and the poorest attendance records (Amdur, 1996).

Similar findings in a study performed at a high school in the mid-west show a substantial increase in failure rates as students enter high school.. A high school in Colorado instituted a program which provided students with the opportunity to shadow high school students in order to become familiar with the high school and meet a student mentor that would assist them throughout their freshman year. The peer leader program was created to allow freshman to meet frequently with their mentor for academic and social support (Pantleo, 1992).

Statistics from a local school district show similar findings. During the 1996-1997 school year a cross-section of freshman were monitored for academic performance and attendance in order to explore the need for more freshman intervention. At the end of the school year the results showed that 33% of the freshman in this cluster had failed one or more classes for the year. In this group, 15% of the freshman failed to earn the minimum number of course credits to earn tenth grade status the following school year and were projected to repeat ninth grade. This was the highest percentage of failure by

class level in that high school. Attending summer school to make up one or two courses in order to become a tenth grader was an option and 7% of the targeted students registered to attend.

The second most important issue for these freshman was loss of credit for classes due to poor attendance. In the same group of freshman students, 12% were denied credit for one or more courses due to poor attendance.

The concern for addressing the needs of adolescents is also cited at the middle school level. The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 proposed to study the performance of a group of 25,000 students as they moved from middle school to high school every two years. They identified several important characteristics at the middle school level that impacted on high school achievement. Research by the NELS:88 and 90 found that 60% of the eighth graders studied had no discussed the selection of their high school courses with a school counselor. In this same group, more than 10% had already demonstrated attendance problems, 30% were displaying academic problems and 22% had been involved in behavioral issues (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Washington D.C. , 1990). A study of eighth and ninth graders in Southern Georgia concluded that between the Spring of eighth grade and the early Fall of ninth grade, students had changed many of their feelings about their physical appearance, their ability to perform acceptably and their appeal to the opposite sex. Overall it was found that the self-worth of adolescents, during this period of time , significantly declined (George, 1997). The implications suggest that a counseling program at the middle school is necessary in order to prepare students for the added independence they will experience at the high school level which is compounded by more social pressures and academic

stress. Preparation and prevention programs, under the direction of effective counselors at the middle school level, are needed to provide students with practical strategies that will help them achieve self-understanding. Activities at this level should include group counseling programs and developmental classroom programs to encourage self-exploration and skills that will help them prepare for the social and academic challenges ahead (Gerler, 1991).

High school programs such as the Freshman Academy (Amdur, 1996) and the statistics accumulated by the researcher reflect the need for a transitional program to assist freshman and improve their performance. Research and personal experience have shown that the impact of entering high school, the rise in the number of adolescents who use or experiment with chemical substances including alcohol and the increase in teenage pregnancy and sexual activity are interrelated and cause many students to be unsuccessful academically, particularly at the ninth grade level..

The concern for the self-esteem of adolescents and its relationship to academic achievement should be at the heart of the counseling program. Although educators proclaim to be attentive to the developmental needs of students, they often do not put enough emphasis on the relationship between interpersonal understanding and the feelings of alienation that many adolescents experience. Teenagers require a special focus on developing their own self-awareness and self-acceptance which will lead to an appreciation of how their own uniqueness and understanding of strengths and weaknesses will result in personal achievement and are not a reflection of failure. Norman Gysbers (1990) defines the guidance and counseling role to be integral in the school rather than an extended service. Gysbers' Comprehensive Guidance Program Model (1990) is a program

which could be incorporated in the creation of a transitional counseling program for freshman. He proposes three major areas of focus during adolescence. The first is in self-knowledge and interpersonal skills where students develop personal standard and a sense of purpose. Secondly, life roles are explored to help students understand how the many life roles one assumes are interrelated. Thirdly, students define their personal values and explore their relationship to career aspirations and decisions. The goal of this model is to give students a sense of belonging by showing them respect, encouraging them and giving validation to their potential.

The objectives of implementing a counseling program for ninth grade students should include large group guidance sessions to address school policies, review programs available at the school and activities the freshman will be participating in. The counselors should also provide small group and individual sessions to give students the opportunity to discuss their feelings, needs and explore current issues which may be effecting the students' performance (Monahan, 1992). The counseling program should be directed to aid students in developing their own sense of personal power and responsibility and one which provides an environment which engages students and their families.

Recommendations for a Freshman Counseling Program

High school freshman have been identified as a group of students who demonstrate a high rate of failure and a rise in absenteeism during the ninth grade. It is proposed that there is a need for a counseling program which focuses on the needs of these adolescents. The orientation for entering high school should begin at the middle school to prepare students for their freshman year. Administrators, counselors and teachers from both the middle school and high school should communicate and participate in the preparing of an orientation program to assist eighth graders as they anticipate the move to the high school.

In addition to the academic concerns, counselors need to address the social behavior of the students and provide intervention programs which include the areas of substance abuse, sexual activity, conflict resolution and decision-making skills.

PART I - ORIENTATION

Administrators and counselors should prepare a two-part orientation program for students at the middle school who will be attending the high school as ninth graders. The first part of this program will be held at the middle school to introduce the courses students will select for the following year. Middle school and freshman counselors will explain requirements and options students are offered and assist students in selecting appropriate courses on a preliminary basis. Courses will not be finalized until parents have been contacted and the students complete the requirements for promotion to grade nine.

The second part of the orientation program will be a visit to the high school for an afternoon program which will include an explanation of procedures, rules and policies, an overview of the activities available to students and a tour of the building to familiarize students with the facility. Students will have the opportunity to meet teachers they may have the following year, become familiar with administrators and have a second opportunity to interact with the counselors. Middle school teachers will accompany the students to reinforce the alliance between the schools and meet with teachers at the high school to enhance inter-school communication.

PART II - LARGE GROUP GUIDANCE SESSIONS

Session 1- Orientation

Counselors should meet with large groups to disseminate general information to the students. Counselors will review school rules, policies on attendance and explain the academic requirements students need to fulfill in order to move on to tenth grade. Counselors should also provide students with information about school activities which are available to the students.

Session 2 - Follow-up and Reinforcement

Counselors should meet with large groups at the end of the first marking period to reinforce attendance policy and academic progress and review any activities within the school which may involve freshman.

Session 3- Planing for the Following Year

Counselors will provide information on course selection for the following year, including the various career-based programs and their requirements. The review of requirements for successful promotion to the next grade will be emphasized and any concerns the students may have at this time will be addressed.

Session 4- Closure for the Freshman Year

Counselors will review procedures for moving on to the tenth grade and survey students about issues and concerns that have been addressed. The individual career plan will be reviewed and placed into the students' files for the tenth grade counselor.

PART III- SMALL GROUP COUNSELING SESSIONS

All ninth grade students should participate in a counseling program which will assist them in identifying their personality style and be introduced to skills that they can use to make personal decisions and begin to set personal goals for their high school career. Students will explore their personality traits through a program to identify personal preferences such as the True Colors (Appendix A) program. As students learn about their own individuality they will apply this information to their learning styles and the possible career options that would be appropriate.

Session 1- Personal Identity

Counselors will define what personality types are and assist students in identifying their own personality qualities and characteristics. The counselor will assist students in examining how their personalities effect how they build their self-esteem, impact on their performance at school and control their emotional behavior.

Session 2- Personal Beliefs

The students will participate in an activity that identifies their own belief system and how this influences their performance, choices and decisions. They will explore how peer pressure impacts on a belief system and may influence behavior contrary to these beliefs.

Session 3- Decision-making

The students will examine and discuss with the counselor the way they make decisions. The counselor will relate the previous information they have accumulated about their personality style and belief system and the relationship these factors have on how decisions are made. The goal of this session is to have students develop at least one short term goal which can be evaluated in the next session.

Session 4- Setting Goals

The students will discuss the success or failure of their short term goal from the previous session. The counselor will encourage students to continue this practice throughout the school year. The students will define and write one long term goal based on the experiences they have had in the small group counseling sessions. The counselor

will ask them to begin to identify what they hope to achieve in their high school career and write a goal related to their plans for the future as they see it at this time.

Session 5- Summary and Closure

The counselor will bring the small group program to a close and ask each student to begin to develop an individual plan for their high school career. Students will incorporate the information of the previous four sessions into a culminating work sheet of information to be used in the future selection of courses which will meet the goals of the student.

PART IV - PEER MENTORING

Upper grade students who have demonstrated leadership qualities and would serve as positive role models would be selected on a voluntary basis to serve as mentors for freshman students. Their qualities for selection should include a caring nature toward other students, a willingness to help others, behavior which demonstrates the belief in following school rules and the ability to control anger and resolve conflict appropriately. Peer leaders would assist in the orientation of freshman at the beginning of the school year and assist the ninth grade counselors in small group counseling sessions. These students may be called upon for assistance on an individual basis when the counselor feels a ninth grade student could benefit from peer input.

PART V - SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

Parents will be invited to participate in an orientation program in the spring before their children enter the high school. Information will be provided by

administrators and supervisors to educate parents about the academic offerings and expectations of the high school. They will have the opportunity to tour the building and ask questions about procedures and policies.

Parents of ninth grade students will meet as a group in mid-September at the Back to School Night program. Counselors will inform the parents of all programs the freshman will be participating in throughout the year. A calendar of scheduled events will be available and the opportunity for questions and answers will be provided. Parents will be informed that classes on parenting adolescents will be available to those that are interested and a sign-up sheet will be posted. Counselors will give a brief overview of the topics that will be covered in the classes. Topics from the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (Appendix B) program will include:

- Adolescent development
- Emotional support
- Building self-esteem in adolescents
- Communication and listening
- Discipline

Two parent meetings will be held throughout the school year to reinforce the freshman program and provide parents with the opportunity to voice concerns, receive on-going information and remain involved in the academic process. These meetings are in addition to parent conferences which are held on a routine basis after progress reports and report cards are issued.

Parents will be encouraged to communicate with the counseling staff about issues which may impede the academic success of their children.

Adolescence has been described as a time of great change in children's lives. Many times the school is the one consistency in their lives and the problems indicative to adolescence impact on academic performance. Educators have the opportunity to address these problems and attempt to implement change.

The ninth grade counseling initiative is a program which will serve to assist students in the transition from middle school to high school. The program proposes an alliance among school personnel, students and parents to provide a community atmosphere which is founded in communication and support during this time of transition.

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Appendix A

The True Colors Program is a program, developed by Dr. David Keirsey which is based on a simplification of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The resource provides exercises and information about individual needs and preferences which impact on human performance. The program leads students to identify their personality type and apply it to one of four color categories. The theory of the True Colors program is that if an individual is able to identify and understand their temperament needs and wants then one is able to satisfy not only one's self, but will be able to motivate and esteem others as well.

The color of an individual is identified through a series of preference checklists which are relates to characteristics which drive behavior. The colors define four major categories of human nature:

Green - knowledge, problem-solving and a desire for expertise.

Blue- sensitivity, spirituality and relationship oriented.

Orange- impulsivity, spontaneity and hands-on problem-solving.

Gold- orderliness, structure and strong sense of responsibility.

The True Colors program provides materials for classroom teachers and counselors in order to enhance their understanding of students' intrinsic behavior and more effectively meet their social and emotional needs.

TRUE COLORS. 1988 Communication Companies International. Corona, CA.

Appendix B

The Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) program is a parent education program based on improving parent-child relationships through personal development exercises designed to improve understanding and communication. The program consists of a ten week series of topics to address issues relevant to parents of teenagers. Topics include:

Personality Development

Emotions

Building Teen Self-Esteem

Communication and Listening

Discipline and Responsibility

The Family Meeting

Special Issues and Challenges

The program teaches parents to understand their teenager and develop a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation. Parents will learn to teach teens how to be independent with the responsibility it requires, build self-confidence and self-esteem and assist in creating a democratic relationship within the family.

STEP. American Guidance Service, Circle Pines, Minnesota.